

## **Statement of Anne Marie Malon**

### **Appropriations Committee**

**February 23, 2017**

Senators and Representatives of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Anne Marie Malon. I'm a resident of Torrington. On March 23, 1999, I was in a near fatal car accident from being improperly medicated and lost my daughter for 5 years. Because of the accident and insufficient legal representation, I ended up with a criminal record. Legally, my spouse was advised to leave me. The courts initially advised that I spend 12 years in prison and I would no longer have my daughter of 8 years living with me. This has had a profound and long lasting impact on my recovery.

I first came into contact with Connecticut Legal Rights Project at Prime Time House in Torrington. I was applying for a Pardon and needing guidance and encouragement going forward attempting to do so for a second time. Trying to afford the fingerprints \$25 and paperwork charges from Middletown \$50 to get the pardon out in a timely manner. CLRP encouraged me to do whatever it takes to complete the Pardon and send it out. They are more than a law office. CLRP is legal representation with commitment and compassion that help people become the best version of themselves.

Specialized legal representation for people with mental illness is essential at times because we are heavily burdened with our individual cases and cannot process our case due to lack of concentration, focus and emotional upheaval. The fear factor may be the most overwhelming emotion that a person with mental illness finds themselves in due to legal action taken against them, that their world could seem so hopeless and worthless to the individual, any support is essential.

Meeting with CLRP Paralegal Wendy Austin weekly was exactly what I needed to realize it's time to take a stand for myself, because no one is going to light the fire and say "Carry on Anne Marie" like Wendy did. I know that without CLRP's assistance I could not move forward with wrapping up this situation.